

Section I — Introduction

The *Accountability Manual* is designed as a technical resource to explain the accountability system used by the Texas Education Agency (TEA) to evaluate the performance of public school districts and campuses. This system integrates district accreditation status, campus ratings, district and campus recognition for high performance and performance improvement, and campus, district, and state-level reports.

This manual addresses the 1997 rating process, special circumstances, other accountability system components, and other information relevant to the system. In addition, it provides a blueprint of the 1998 - 2000 accountability systems so that schools and districts are notified of future standards. All information necessary to compute 1997 ratings and acknowledgments is conveyed.

System Philosophy

Guiding Principles

Since 1993, the Texas Education Agency has worked closely with public school personnel and others to develop an integrated accountability system. The system is based upon a number of guiding principles. These are:

Student Performance

The system is first and foremost designed to improve student performance;

Recognition of Diversity

The system is fair and recognizes diversity among schools and students;

System Stability

The system is stable and provides a realistic, practical timeline for measurement, data collection, planning, staff development, and reporting;

Appropriate Consequences

The system sets reasonable standards for adequacy, identifies and publicly recognizes high levels of performance and performance improvement, and identifies schools with inadequate performance and provides assistance;

Guiding Principles (cont.)

Statutory Compliance

The system is designed to comply with statutory requirements;

Local Program Flexibility

The system allows for flexibility in the design of programs to meet the individual needs of students;

Local Responsibility

The system relies on local school districts to develop and implement local accountability systems that complement the state system; and

Public's Right to Know

The system supports the public's right to know levels of student performance in each school district and on each campus.

Components of the System

AEIS

As stated previously, this system integrates district accreditation status, campus ratings, district and campus recognition for high performance, and campus, district, and state-level reports. The Academic Excellence Indicator System (AEIS) serves as the basis for all accountability ratings, rewards, and reports.

Ratings

Districts receive an accreditation status and campuses receive a performance rating. For 1997, each district and campus are assigned one of these ratings:

----- DISTRICT RATINGS -----		----- CAMPUS RATINGS -----	
<u>Standard</u>	<u>Special Circumstances</u>	<u>Standard</u>	<u>Special Circumstances</u>
• Exemplary	• Delayed	• Exemplary	• Not Rated
• Recognized		• Recognized	• Delayed: YRE
• Academically Acceptable		• Acceptable	• Delayed: Alternative Education
• Academically Unacceptable		• Low-performing	

Indicators

Base Indicators are those indicators used for determining accountability ratings. For the 1997 accountability system there are three base indicators for all levels of ratings:

- Texas Assessment of Academic Skills (TAAS) performance in reading, mathematics, and writing;
- Dropout Rate; and
- Attendance Rate.

Additionally, districts and campuses may receive recognition on Additional Indicators: those performance assessments identified in statute or identified by the commissioner, but not used to determine ratings. Any district or campus meeting all of the base indicator standards for at least *Academically Acceptable / Acceptable* is eligible to be considered for this additional acknowledgment. In 1997, there are two Additional Indicators: College Admissions Testing Results and TAAS / TASP Equivalency.

The system allows for new indicators to be phased in over a number of years prior to use in the accountability system as base or additional indicators. In general, new indicators are benchmarked for one year, reported for the next two years, and used in the system for ratings or acknowledgments the fourth year. See Section II, *1997 Accountability System* for more information on this process. Other information may be designated as "Report-Only Indicators," meaning that they are reported on AEIS but not be evaluated against a state standard. In 1997, several new report-only indicators are provided for the first time.

Rewards

At publication, statute provides for two rewards for high performing or improving schools. The Texas Successful Schools Award System (TSSAS) provides for campus monetary awards to schools; the Principal Performance Incentive Program (PPI) provides for the distribution of monetary awards to principals. At publication, only the PPI program is funded. Legislative action in the spring of 1997 will determine the implementation of awards programs in 1997 and the future. The highest performing districts and campuses are also exempted by statute from specific regulations and requirements.

Reports

District and campus Academic Excellence Indicator System AEIS reports show performance on indicators — base, additional, and report-only — as well as profile data items. Profile items are student, staff, and budgeted financial information which provide context for interpreting the performance results. Annual AEIS data serve as the basis for all accountability ratings, awards, and reports. Since TAAS testing now occurs in late spring, these reports are issued the following fall.

Reports (cont.)

A second reporting component required by statute is the School Report Card. TEA provides each school with a custom School Report Card which it, in turn, must provide to each student's family. See Section VII, *Accountability System Reports* for more information about each of these reports.

Key Dates

Release dates for ratings, recognitions, and reports are identified below. A complete schedule of all events affecting the accountability system is provided in Section XII, *Additional Information*.

August 1

Ratings for Traditional Calendar Schools.

TEA notifies districts and campuses operating on a traditional school calendar of final accountability ratings. Districts and schools with any students tested on the optional June TAAS administration available to campuses operating on a year-round calendar receive a preliminary rating at this time. Schools with all students tested on the optional administration, or those with unresolved data problems, receive a *Delayed* rating at this time. Alternative education schools evaluated using Optional Evaluation criteria are rated *Delayed: Alternative Education*.

September 1

Ratings for Year-Round Calendar and Alternative Education Schools.

TEA notifies districts and campuses operating on a year-round school calendar of accountability ratings. Campuses with any students tested on the optional June TAAS administration in campuses operating on a year-round calendar receive a rating at this time and those which received a *Delayed* rating on August 1 receive a final rating, including alternative education schools.

October 15

AEIS Reports.

TEA issues AEIS reports to all districts and campuses.

November 15

School Report Card.

TEA provides the School Report Card to all districts for each campus.

to be announced

Reward Program Notification.

TEA notifies principals and / or schools of awards made through a statutory reward program.